

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a current listing of claims and will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please amend the claims as follows:

1-68. (Canceled)

69. (Currently Amended) A combined switch and service processor module for a modular computer system, comprising:

a switch portion;

a service processor portion;

a data interface configured to ~~for~~ communicate~~[[ing]]~~ with an external management entity via a network; and

a fault management unit~~[[;]]~~ ~~wherein the fault management unit is configured to receive~~ ~~intercept~~ fault messages generated by the switch portion and ~~by~~ the service processor portion, including respective fault messages generated by the switch portion and the service processor portion that relate to a common fault, and wherein the fault management unit is further configured to perform processing on a received ~~the~~ fault message~~[[s]]~~ to determine whether to forward ~~the received~~ ~~a given~~ message to the external management entity via the data interface, wherein the fault management unit is configured to not forward fault messages that relate to a fault for which the fault management unit has already forwarded a fault message to the external management entity.

70. (Original) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the fault management unit is implemented within the service processor portion.

71. (Original) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the fault management unit stores details of fault messages received irrespective of whether the message is forwarded to the external management entity.

72. (Previously Presented) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 71, wherein the stored details of the fault messages includes data describing an action taken by the originator of the fault message in response to detection of the fault.

73. (Previously Presented) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 71, wherein the stored details of fault messages are analyzed to determine whether any reversal actions are required by the originator of a given fault message when a fault repair is attempted.

74-75. (Canceled)

76. (Original) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the switch portion and service processor portion are implemented by separate hardware within the module.

77. (Original) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the switch portion and service processor portion are implemented by common hardware within the module.

78. (Previously Presented) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the service processor portion is configured to operate in master/slave relationship with a service processor portion of a further combined switch and service processor module of the modular computer system; and

wherein the service processor portion is further configured to automatically synchronize management information with the service processor portion of the further combined switch and service processor via the data interface in accordance with the master/slave relationship.

79. (Previously Presented) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the switch and service processor portions are each configured to communicate with the external management entity to obtain a unique address within a computing environment into which the modular computer system is connected.

80. (Previously Presented) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the service processor portion has a user interface configured to receive and forward communications between the external management entity and the switch portion.

81. (Previously Presented) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the switch and service processor portions are each configured to create a unique identifier using data unique to the respective portions; and

wherein the service processor portion is configured to supply the service processor portion's unique identifier to the switch.

82. (Currently Amended) A computer system comprising:
- a combined switch and service processor module, comprising:
 - a switch portion;
 - a service processor portion;
 - a data interface configured to ~~for~~ communicate~~[[ing]]~~ with an external management entity via a network; and
 - a fault management unit~~[[;]]~~ ~~wherein the fault management unit is~~ configured to receive ~~intercept~~ fault messages generated by the switch portion and by the service processor portion, including respective fault messages generated by the switch portion and the service processor portion that relate to a common fault, and wherein the fault management unit is further configured to perform processing on a received ~~the~~ fault message~~[[s]]~~ to determine whether to forward ~~a given~~ the received message to the external management entity via the data interface, wherein the fault management unit is configured to not forward fault messages that relate to a fault for which the fault management unit has already forwarded a fault message to the external management entity.

- 83-85. (Canceled)

86. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a combined switch and service processor module for a modular computer system, the combined switch and service processor module having: a switch portion; a service processor portion; a data interface ~~for~~ configured to communicate with an external management entity via a network; and a fault management unit; the method comprising:

~~operating the fault management unit to intercept~~ receiving fault messages generated by the switch portion and by the service processor portion including a first fault message generated by the switch portion and a second fault message generated by the service processor portion, wherein the first and second fault messages relate to a common fault; and to

the fault management unit performing processing on the a received fault message[s] to determine whether to forward the received ~~a given~~ message to the external management entity via the data interface; and

the fault management unit not forwarding fault messages that relate to a fault for which the fault management unit has already forwarded a fault message to the external management entity.

87. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 82, wherein the fault management unit is implemented within the service processor portion.

88. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 82, wherein the fault management unit is further configured to store details of fault messages received irrespective of whether the message is forwarded to the external management entity.

89. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 88[[87]], wherein the stored details of the fault messages include data describing an action taken by the originator of the fault message in response to detection of the fault.

90. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 88[[87]], wherein the fault management unit is further configured to analyze the stored details of fault messages to

determine whether any reversal actions are required by the originator of a given fault message when a fault repair is attempted.

91-92. (Canceled)

93. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 82, wherein the service processor portion is configured to operate in master/slave relationship with a service processor portion of a further combined switch and service processor module of the computer system; and

wherein the service processor portion is further configured to automatically synchronize management information with the service processor portion of the further combined switch and service processor via the data interface in accordance with the master/slave relationship.

94. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 86, wherein the fault management unit is implemented within the service processor portion.

95. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 86, further comprising the fault management unit storing details of fault messages received irrespective of whether the message is forwarded to the external management entity.

96. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 95, wherein the stored details of the fault messages includes data describing an action taken by the originator of the fault message in response to detection of the fault.

97. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 95, further comprising the fault management unit analyzing the stored details of fault messages to determine whether any reversal actions are required by the originator of a given fault message when a fault repair is attempted.

98-99. (Canceled)

100. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 86, further comprising operating the service processor portion in master/slave relationship with a service processor portion of a further combined switch and service processor module of the modular computer system; and

the service processor portion automatically synchronizing management information with the service processor portion of the further combined switch and service processor via the data interface in accordance with the master/slave relationship.

101. (Previously Presented) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the switch portion is configured to:

detect a fault in an information processing module coupled to the switch portion;

in response to detecting a fault in the information processing module:

disable the network port of the information processing module; and

convey a corresponding fault message to the fault management unit.

102. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 82, wherein the switch portion is configured to:

detect a fault in an information processing module coupled to the switch portion;

in response to detecting a fault in the information processing module:

disable the network port of the information processing module; and

convey a corresponding fault message to the fault management unit.

103. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 86, further comprising:

the switch portion detecting a fault in an information processing module;

in response to the detecting:

the switch portion disabling the network port of the information processing module; and

the switch portion conveying a corresponding fault message to the fault management unit.

104. (New) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the fault management unit is configured to:

- receive a first fault message generated by the switch portion that relates to a particular fault;

- forward the first fault message to the external management entity;

- receive a second fault message generated by the service portion, wherein the second fault message relates to the particular fault, and wherein the second fault message is received by the fault management unit after receiving the first fault message; and

- not forward the second fault message to the external management entity in response to determining that the second fault message is related to the particular fault and that the first fault message has already been forwarded to the external management entity.